

Visitor Center

Figure 24 illustrates the master plan recommendations in the vicinity of the Haw River State Park Visitor Center.

The visitor center will serve as the primary location for general public contact for the greater park. It will include an exhibit hall, a sales area, a superintendent office, and other staff areas. Since conference facilities are available at The Summit, this visitor center will not initially include conference or meeting rooms, classrooms or an auditorium. Based on future demand, the facility could be expanded in the proposed location to accommodate additional uses.

Parking for the visitor center is recommended to include 40 visitor spaces, 10 staff spaces and two spaces to accommodate buses or large recreational vehicles. The location identified for the visitor center could accommodate additional parking spaces if needed with future expansion of the facility.

The visitor center site will require electric, water, phone, internet, and wastewater utilities. Electric may be trenched during road construction under the entry drive. The N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation will explore renewable energy options for this project. Existing wells on site may be evaluated for potable water supply; however, it is anticipated that a new well will be required. An appropriate septic area will be defined for the site prior to construction, and will be sized appropriately to accommodate restrooms.

An approximately one-half mile universally-designed interpretive trail will originate and terminate at the visitor center, providing a primarily woodland experience as it winds through the adjacent woodland interior ①. Wayside exhibits will help interpret the sites along the trail. This trail will provide a convenient way for any user to experience the park in a short time period.

Trailheads and Day Use Areas

A trailhead is proposed off of the entry road about one-half mile into the park from the main entrance off Church Street. Access to this trailhead ② will be provided by a parking lot containing

approximately 20 spaces. This trailhead will provide an access point into the trail system of the greater park. An orientation kiosk will provide a map and general information about the park.

Two day use areas are proposed just past the visitor center at the terminus of the entry drive in the Church Street Section. Each of the two day use areas will include a shelter as well as associated, uncovered picnic areas.

One of these areas ③ will include a shelter sized for six picnic tables as well as approximately 10 separate picnic sites with tables and grills tucked under existing large oak trees. These picnic sites should have close proximity to the shelter to allow rental of the entire space by larger groups. Parking for 32 vehicles will be provided.

The second day use area ④ will include a shelter sized for 10 picnic tables. It also will include approximately 10 separate picnic sites with tables and grills. This area will be supported by 40 parking spaces. The two picnic areas will share one toilet building to be located half way between the two shelters. The site will require electric, water, and wastewater utilities ⑤.

The northernmost of these two day use areas is proposed to include a major trailhead ⑥. This trailhead is proposed to lead to a wetlands-view boardwalk (described later) as well as to a looped system of trails throughout the park.

An open, multi-purpose field ⑦ is proposed immediately to the north of the day use areas. This site has been selected due to its flat topography, excellent proximity to the day use areas, and its compatible use as an emergency landing zone (100-foot radius).

Maintenance Area

Figure 24 also illustrates the location and schematic layout for a maintenance area ⑧. This facility is intended to be the primary maintenance area for the greater park. This maintenance area is centrally located for easy access to existing and future areas of the park. Site selection for this maintenance area in the Church Street Section was based on suitable topography for the programmed use of the space, a location that could be screened from the entry